

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2385

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, KS, US
SUBJ: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR KIM YONG-SHIK ON US-ROK PROBLEMS

REF: STATE 69170

1. I MET PRIVATELY LATE YESTERDAY (MARCH 23) WITH AMBASSADOR KIM YONG-SHIK FOR FIRST TIME SINCE HIS RETURN TO KOREA. KIM BROUGHT ME UP TO DATE ON HIS INITIAL CONSULTATIONS IN SEOUL, INCLUDING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK.

2. OUR CONVERSATION FOCUSED PARTICULARLY ON KIM DONG-JO PROBLEM, WHICH AMBASSADOR KIM VIEW AS ONLY MAJOR OBSTACLE NOW TO IMPROVED US-KOREAN RELATIONS. HE REVIEWED HIS CONVERSATIONS BOTH WITH SPEAKER O'NEILL AND PETER WHITE ON THIS QUESTION. O'NEILL WAS QUITE DIRECT IN TELLING KIM THAT TRANSFER LEGISLATION EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PASS IN ABSENCE SOLUTION OF KIM DONG-JO PROBLEM. KIM'S MEETING WITH WHITE WAS, ACCORDING TO KIM, CORDIAL BUT UNPRODUCTIVE. KIM SOUGHT FROM WHITE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW ROKG MIGHT RESOLVE KIM DONG-JO QUESTION WITHIN FRAMEWORK CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND CONVENTION. HOWEVER, WHITE SOUGHT COMMITMENT OF ROKG TO COOPERATE WITH ETHICS COMMITTEE, BEFORE SPELLING OUT HIS VIEWS ON POSSIBLE MEANS OF COOPERATION; IN OTHER WORDS, FROM KIM'S VIEWPOINT BLANK CHECK WHICH ROKG NOT
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PREPARED TO PROVIDE.

3. KIM WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF US ADMINISTRATION POSITION ON KIM DONG-JO AFFAIR, NAMELY STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENTS, ABSENCE OF DIRECT USG PRESSURE, BUT EFFORTS TO FACILITATE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ETHICS COMMITTEE. KIM REPORTED THAT SINCE HIS RETURN HE HAS BEEN EXPLORING

STEPS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO MAKE KIM DONG-JO AVAILABLE

BUT IN TERMS WHICH CAN BE CONSTRUED TO CONFIRM TO INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE. CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY OF INFORMAL MEETING BETWEEN KIM DONG-JO AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES IN SEOUL, BUT IT WAS FELT THAT RESULTANT PUBLICINTE AND EVEN APPRANCE OF HIS QTE INTERROGATION UNQTE WOULD SO EMBARRASS ROKG AS TO MAKE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. CONSIDERATION THEREFORE NOW BEING GIVEN TO STEPS SHORT OF THIS, INCLUDING LETTER FROM KIM DONG-JO EXPLAINING HIS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST HIM OR POSSIBLY TELEPHONE CALL BETWEEN KIM DONG-JO AND DESIGNATED PERSON WHICH WOULD BE INITIATED BY DONG-JO QTE VOLUNTARILY UNQTE.

4. KIM EMPHASIZED THAT ANY SOLUTION MUST HAVE DONG-JO'S AGREEMENT AND BE ON A VOLUNTARY AND PERSONAL BASIS DESIGNED OBSTENSIBLY TO CLEAR HIS REPUTATION. HE DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH PRESIDENT PARK AND OBVIOUSLY RECEIVED GO AHEAD TO CONTINUE EXPLORATIONS TO FIND POSSIBLE MEANS OF COOPERATION WITH ETHICS COMMITTEE. I ENCOURAGED KIM TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO FIND BASIS FOR MAXIMUM COOPERATION WHICH WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE.

5. KIM REITERATED THAT IN OTHER RESPECTS ROKG ALSO EXTREMELY CONFIDENTIAL

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PLEASED WITH RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXECUTIVE BRANCH. HE FELT TONGSUN PARK'S APPEARANCES BEFORE ETHICS COMMITTEES WENT VERY WELL FROM ROKG VIEWPOINT, DESPITE INHERENT RISKS INVOLVED. IN THIS CONNECTION HE MENTIONED THAT TONGSUN PARK HAD WISHED TO RETURN TO KOREA THIS WEEKEND AND DELAY PUBLIC HEARINGS BEFORE ETHICS COMMITTEES UNTIL LATE APRIL. HOWEVER, INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN SENT TO KOREAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO URGE TONGSUN PARK TO STAY IN WASHINGTON AND FINISH OFF PUBLIC HEARINGS IN EARLY APRIL.

6. KIM ALSO EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION FOR RECENT ACTIONS OF USG ON PL-480 AND ADB, AT WHICH PINT I ENCOURAGED KIM TO SEEK RECISION OF EM-9. KIM ADDITIONALLY MENTIONED THAT HIS MORE RECENT TALKS WITH SENATOR STEVENSON HAVE BEEN LESS DIFFICULT AND HE IS THEREFORE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THREATS TO DISAPPROVE EXIM LOAN FOR KORI THREE AND FOUR. FINALLY, KIM MENTIONED THAT I WILL SHORTLY BE RECEIVING OFFICIALLY FROM FONMIN AN AFFIRMATIVE REPLY TO TITO PROPOSAL ON THREE-POWER KOREAN TALKS, ALTHOUGH SOME CONDITIONS MAY BE ATTACHED.
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